REMARKS

Claims numbered 1 to 38, 47, and 48 were considered in the office action of October 6, 2003 and claims numbered 39 to 46 and 49 were withdrawn from consideration as a result of the election of the claims of Group I, without traverse, in the response of July 30, 2003. In reviewing the claims, it has been noted that two claims were filed with a claim number of 44. The claims have been amended to correct this error. In addition, the claim that was originally numbered 47 has been amended to be a method claim. As amended, claims 1 to 38 and 49 are included in Group I and claims 39 to 48 and 50 are included in Group II.

Claims 2, 4, 8, 11, 13 to 18, 20, 22 to 27, 29, 31, 34 to 38 and 49 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3, 5 to 7, 9, 10, 12, 19, 21, 28, 30, 32 and 33 remain under consideration.

The resilient, polymeric fiber liner insulation of the subject invention has a resilient insulation blanket core of polymeric fibers. The blanket core has a thickness of about 0.5 inches or greater and a density between 1 pcf and 3 pcf. The polymeric fibers of the blanket include between 60% and 90% by weight standard polymeric staple fibers and/or flame retardant polymeric staple fibers and between 10% and 40% by weight lofting and bonding polymeric fibers. The polymeric fibers have an average denier between 3 and 15 and an average length between 0.5 and 4.0 inches.

The liner insulation of the subject invention has a surface layer that is coextensive and integral with the first major surface of the blanket core. This surface layer is either a polymeric coating surface layer that has a dry application weight of between 8 and 20 g/ft^2 or a surface layer formed from thermoplastic polymeric staple fibers that, at and adjacent the first major surface of the blanket core, have been melted and consolidated to form the surface layer. The surface layer forming the first major surface of the liner insulation is less permeable than the second major surface of the blanket core and has a porosity between 200 and 1000 Mks Rayls that is selected to provide the polymeric fiber liner insulation with a higher noise reduction coefficient than an identical polymeric fiber insulation blanket without the surface layer and to enhance the sound absorption properties of the liner insulation while retaining a smooth surface on the layer to minimize locations where dust, dirt particles, bacteria and mold can collect on the surface layer. In addition, the polymeric fiber liner insulation of the subject

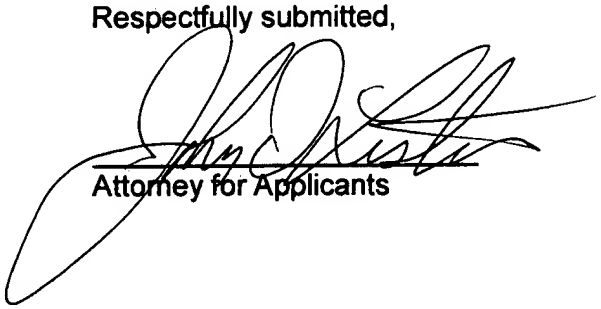
invention has a flame spread/smoke developed index of ≤ 25/50 and a preferred embodiment of the polymeric fiber liner insulation of the subject invention will recover substantially to its initial thickness after being compressed to one third or less of its initial thickness.

Claims 1 to 38 and 49 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Isoda et al (5,298,321) in view of Haines et al (5, 824,973). Isoda et al disclose a recyclable vehicular cushioning material and seat that may be finished "with a covering, wadding layer (inner lining fabric), and optional cushioning layer". Thus, unlike the resilient, polymeric fiber liner insulation of the subject invention with its integral surface layer as set forth in independent claims 1 and 7, Isoda et al disclose a cushioning material with a covering that has a wadding layer intermediate the covering and the cushioning material. The covering of Isoda is not a surface layer of the material that is integral with the material like the integral coating surface layer or the integral melted fiber surface layer of the liner insulation of the subject invention. Isoda et al also disclose a cushioning material that may have the same density, fiber diameter and thickness as the blanket core of liner insulation of the subject invention. However, while the cushioning material of Isoda et al may have the same density as the blanket core of the liner insulation of the subject invention, the resulting porosity of a major surface of cushioning material of Isoda et al would not be equivalent to the porosity of the integral surface layer (coating layer or melted fiber layer) of the liner insulation of the subject invention and the disclosure of Isoda et al would not suggest a liner insulation having a surface layer with a porosity between 200 and 1000 Mks Rayls that provides the polymeric fiber liner insulation with a higher noise reduction coefficient than an identical polymeric fiber insulation blanket without the surface layer and that enhances the sound absorption properties of the liner insulation while retaining a smooth surface on the layer to minimize locations where dust, dirt particles, bacteria and mold can collect on the surface layer. Isoda et al disclose the use of a fire retardant or fire retardant polyester fibers in the cushioning material, but unlike the liner insulation of the subject invention as set forth in claims 1 and 7, Isoda et al do not disclose or suggest a liner insulation, which in addition to the other unique structural advantages discussed above, also exhibits a flame spread/smoke developed index of ≤ 25/50. Haines et al disclose a sound absorbing laminate with a polymeric fiber blanket that has an acrylic coating. However, like Isoda et al Haines et al fails to disclose or suggest a liner insulation that has a surface layer with a porosity between 200 and 1000 Mks Rayls while retaining a smooth

surface or a liner insulation, which in addition to the other unique structural advantages discussed above, also exhibits a flame spread/smoke developed index of ≤ 25/50.

In view of the amendments to the claims and for the reasons set forth above, the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3, 5 to 7, 9, 10, 12, 19, 21, 28, 30, 32 and 33 as being unpatentable over Isoda et al in view of Haines et al is requested and the allowance of claims 1, 3, 5 to 7, 9, 10, 12, 19, 21, 28, 30, 32 and 33 is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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